

HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Police Car Involved In Crash Explosion



DRY LAND MERMAIDS—Posing in the costumes they will wear while riding Torrance's float in the Tournament of Roses Parade today, are, from left, Betty Baker, Miss Torrance, Glenda Schwartz, Miss Welteria, Judi Tye, Miss Torrance Chamber of Commerce, Donna Isbell, Miss Airport Day and Joyce Cannon, runner-up in Miss Torrance contest. "Adventures in Aviation" will be the theme of the Torrance float, which will be a replica of Lindbergh's historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean. The float will be on exhibit here in El Prado Park Saturday and Sunday. Press Photo

Driver Crushed By Truck

A police car and two other autos exploded into a roaring inferno early yesterday morning, and a dump truck driver was crushed to death in two spectacular accidents.

The three vehicles were completely burned after one of them rammed into the rear of the patrol car which had stopped behind another machine at Pacific Coast Hwy. and Hillworth St.

Officers Jerry Snyder, 29, and Tom Woodridge, 27, were issuing a speed citation to Mrs. Billie Mazzello, of San Pedro, when the other machine allegedly rammed into the back of the police car at speeds estimated between 70 and 80 miles per hour, police reported.

Arrested on suspicion of felonious drunk driving was James R. Oliver, 29, an electronic technician of 5110 Laurette St.

Police said that Woodridge and Snyder dragged Oliver from his auto seconds before his machine caught fire, after they had already helped Mrs. Mazzello from her vehicle.

Officers said that the police car exploded into flames on impact and the fire spread to the two other cars, all of which were destroyed, with damage estimated at \$10,000.

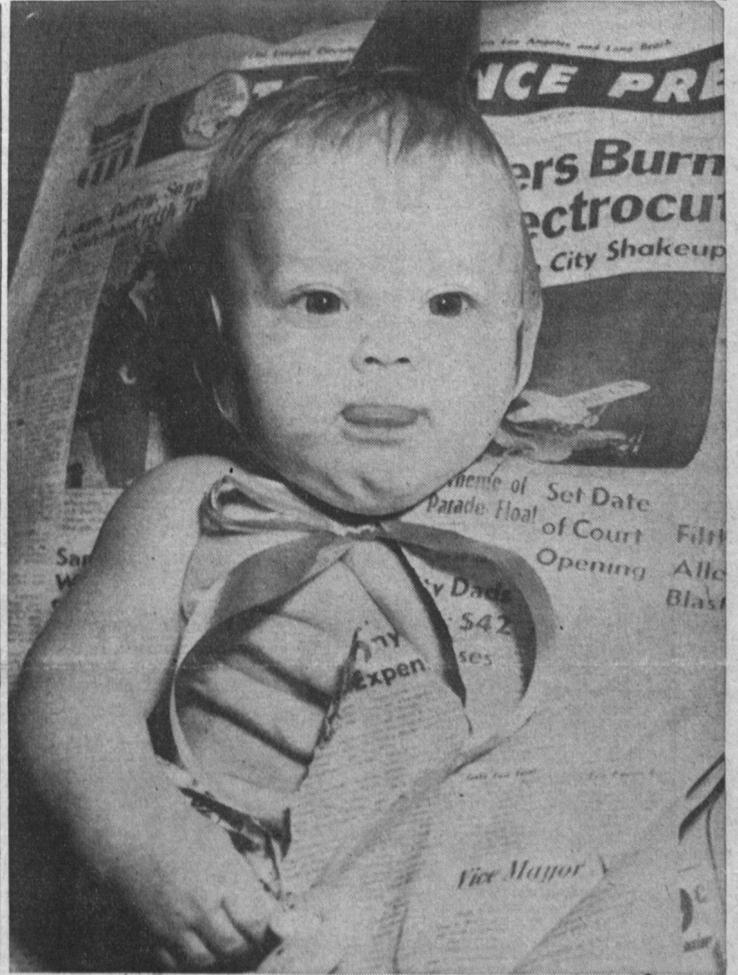
Woodridge and Snyder were both standing on the right side of their police car when the collision took place. They said that all their warning lights were on.

Mrs. Mazzello was reportedly injured, but the extent was undetermined.

Police said that Oliver's car was apparently next to the curb, and possibly touching it, before it crashed.

In another accident at the Roger Jessup Dairy on Del Amo Blvd., a truck driver, tentatively identified as Donald L. Baker of Artesia, was apparently crushed to death.

He was pinned under the heavy vehicle, which was used to haul fertilizer, Police believed he might have been working underneath it when a bolt was sheared off, causing the truck bed to come down.



AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR—Christina, five months old, sticks tongue out at 1958, as she gets set to celebrate the New Year. Judging by her facial expression, she expects many good things to happen to her during 1959. Press Photo

Markets May Be Closed

Negotiations continued by press time to avert a threatened strike by food clerks which could close markets beginning today.

Some 36,000 members of the Retail Clerks Union are demanding a wage-benefit hike estimated at 80 cents per hour.

Warning that the average family has less than a week's supply of food on hand, was given by Robert K. Fox, president of the Food Employers' Council.

Spokesmen for the union said that the strike, if called will be selective, and not hit all stores at once. But indications are that many markets will be closed down, even though not hit by walkouts.

Fox said that the union demands are impractical since the average market profit is one cent of the sales dollar.



BURNED OUT—A police car and another car involved in a three-car crash early yesterday, were completely burned out. The policeman had stopped a driver for a citation, when another auto plowed into the rear of the patrol car, causing an instant explosion.

Murder Hearing Set for Pair

Preliminary hearing for two youths for the murder of a barber and robbery of his companion will be held in Torrance Municipal Court Jan. 9.

Edward Thomas Benavidez and Joseph Barreras were re-arrested Tuesday after their alleged victim, Aaron William Johnson, 40, died of a shotgun wound.

The shooting took place on 152nd St. near Western Ave. Dec. 21, while Johnson and his nephew, Dale M. Allsop, 25, of 1845 St. Andrews Place, were walking to the latter's home.

This Thief Did The Lady a Big Favor

Mrs. Ida Allison has good cause to be grateful to the thief who stole her car from the Torrance Memorial Hospital parking lot Sunday evening.

Due to a peculiar twist of fate, the auto was in much better shape when it was returned to her Monday than it had been Sunday night.

The thief drove the machine a few blocks to the Torrance Car Wash at 213th St. and Border Ave., where he parked it on a polish rack.

When Edward Alan, manager of the place saw the car parked there Monday morning, he quite naturally assumed that a customer had left it there for a wax job.

Employees worked hard for two hours washing, cleaning and waxing the car to restore its factory-new luster, a job that usually costs \$13.

Alan became somewhat worried when no one showed up to claim the car by 5 p.m., and he called Torrance police. They made a hasty check of their records and discovered it was stolen.

The wash rack manager, the only loser in the whole affair, gave the auto thief credit for his brains.

"He was pretty smart. By the time we got through with the car, there wasn't a single finger print left on it," he remarked admiringly.

Man Dies While Taking Patient To Hospital

A Torrance man who had driven a neighbor to a doctor's office Monday was found dead in his car in the parking lot, believed the victim of a heart attack.

Nick Percan, 68, of 1324 Amapola St., apparently died while seated in his auto, which was parked in the lot behind the office of Dr. John Tiplin, 1333 Post Ave., police reported.

Mrs. Lucy Malonek, of 1342 1/2 Amapola St., told officers that Percan had driven her to the doctor's office, and waited in the car while she was inside.

Girl, 14, Jumps Out of Window

A 14-year-old girl who jumped from a second story window in an apartment house at 922 Satori Ave., suffered a broken vertebra and cuts and bruises Sunday.

Police said the girl either jumped or fell from the window while her mother was reprimanding her. Following first aid treatment at Harbor General Hospital, she was released.

POWDER PUFF RACE

A resolution offering Torrance Municipal Airport as the starting point for the 1960 Powder Puff Derby was approved by the City Council Tuesday.

Torrance Banner Year Seen For 1959

The same solid growth which Torrance experienced in 1958 is expected to continue this year.

Additional new industries, businesses, homes and schools, as well as another population increase is seen by community leaders during the next 12 months.

Many of the projects started during the past year will be completed during 1959.

These will include the multi-million Del'Amo Shopping Center, the Little Company of Mary Hospital, several new subdivisions and apartment buildings.

While the building pace during recession-hit 1958 was not as great as in some of the earlier years when subdivisions seemed to mushroom out of barley fields, it still will be close to \$24,000,000.

Following a January valuation of \$7,000,000, construction slowed down for part of the year, but is again surging upward.

Several million dollars worth of apartment and tract plans are now being processed by the building department and are expected to be constructed this year.

Three new elementary schools will open this spring in North Torrance, and at least two others are expected to be opened later this year to help cut down double sessions and provide for the record enrollment of more than 23,000 students.

The Torrance Unified School District voted a \$15,000,000 bond issue during October and is also planning to expand both North and South High Schools and is acquiring the property for the proposed West High School.

While school funds were voted by an overwhelming ma-

jority, a \$3,000,000 bond issue to provide recreation facilities lost out at the polls during the April city election. Some action to provide additional facilities is expected to be taken during 1959.

At least a partial solution to the flood hazards that hit the city hard during February is expected to come out of \$3,000,000 in storm drains to be paid out of a county bond issue approved in November. Funds are to be allocated to drain the Welteria Lake area by creating a huge sump, which could possibly also be used as a recreational lake.

While working on the problem of too much water in one area, the city is concerned with the lack of it in South Torrance, where a building ban has been clamped on, following complaints of low pressure and danger of fires.

At the same time the city is anxious to take over some of the private water companies which now serve portions of Torrance and expand the municipal service over all the city.

Inaugurated during the first week of 1958 was Torrance's own Municipal Court. Lodged in temporary facilities in the old city hall during the past year, a new building has been provided in the civic center, and will be opened early this year.

Hollywood Riviera finally got its own library branch in El Retiro Park, which is expected to be placed into operation within a few weeks.

On the highway front, a contract was awarded in fall to extend the Harbor Freeway south to 190th St., a project that should be completed within two years. Requests to accelerate construction of the San Diego freeway through Torrance were less successful, despite a personal appeal to State Highway

Division officials.

The City Council has also requested extension of Del Amo Blvd., Arlington Ave. and Hawthorne Blvd. to eliminate some of the traffic congestion.

While wild animals got the official heave-ho from Torrance during the past year, cows were given an opportunity to demonstrate their neighborliness. Following stormy public hearings, the City Council did not approve an ordinance which would have banned the city's 11 dairies. But lions, tigers, cheetahs, monkeys and other "wild" animals were ordered out of the city by a law approved in mid-year.

Huge developments are in the planning stage at Torrance Municipal Airport which came under city operation earlier in 1958. An option for a hotel and terminal building has been granted by the city, and additional tower and lighting equipment has been installed.

While Torrance had its share of accidents, shootings and fires, probably the outstanding disaster of 1958 was the destruction by fire of the 30-year-old Hollywood Riviera Club. The old landmark was gutted during the morning of Sept. 25, even while negotiations were carried on to purchase it as a teenage center.

Torrance got into the international act late in 1958 when it was accepted as a sister city by Konya, Turkey. The exchange of letters, ideas, and perhaps even personal visits is expected to get really going during the coming year.

With more and more industries and commercial developments, and the end of the recession which marked the greater part of the past year, 1959 looks like another good year for Torrance.